

P 131259Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2320
INFO ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
CIS COLLECTIVE
EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
IRAN COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
JOINT STAFF WASHDC
NSC WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T ASHGABAT 000218

NOFORN

STATE FOR NEA/IR AND SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/13/2019

TAGS: [IR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN/IRAN: WEAPONS FOUND HIDDEN IN IRANIAN
EMBASSY SHIPMENT

Classified By: Charge Richard Miles, reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (S/NF) A Turkmen customs official told an Embassy LES on February 13 that an Iranian Embassy diplomatic container with AK-47's, sniper rifles and ammunition hidden in it had been discovered one week earlier at the Serdar Uli (Gaudan) customs point in Ashgabat, where vehicles and containers arriving from or bound for Iran are inspected. The weapons were reportedly hidden underneath two Turkmen carpets that the Iranian Embassy was shipping to Iran.

¶2. (S/NF) The LES went to the Ashgabat Customs Point (a different location) to inquire about an Embassy pouch shipment arriving by truck, and an issue arose about opening the Embassy's container for inspection. The customs official, who is a close friend of LES, then brought up the Iranian container incident. He said that a local shipping employee of the Iranian Embassy had been present when another official, acting on a "hunch that something was not right," opened the Iranian Embassy container. The customs official told LES that the official who discovered the cache was honored for his actions and received a promotion.

¶3. (S/NF) COMMENT: Turkmenistan imposes stringent controls on the importation of any type of firearm, and Chiefs of Missions' security detail are all unarmed. Even assuming that the weapons in question were intended for the Iranian Embassy's internal security, this would not explain the presence of offensive weapons such as sniper rifles, in the cache. The Embassy has no official confirmation about the incident, which was, we note, relayed second-hand to our LES.
END COMMENT.

MILES